Evangelina G. Sanchez

ELED 310

Family Interview

December 2011

Overview:

I chose to interview my father since he’s oldest and closest living relative, besides my grandmother who is 89 years old and does not speak any English. Growing up in my family, we moved a lot due to military, which made it very hard for us to keep in close contact with our extended family. My mother had 16 brothers and sisters of whom I’ve only met 2. I am aware of a few first cousins (on my mother’s side) who live in the states but have never been in close contact with them. This project was very important to me because I felt that it was time that I met or made contact with more of my family members, especially on my mother’s side in the Philippines. With the help of Facebook, I have been able to make little contact with some first cousins who also have never heard of their aunt (my mother) or her children. I hope that this first interview will open some doors and shed some light on what has been a closed book for the last 36 years of my life. We are also a military family but it is very important for my children to know who their family is and to always keep the doors open to new experiences.

Full Name: Tomas Gonzalez-Vigo Jr.

1. When and where were you born? Juan Diaz. Puerto Rico
2. Where did your family come from and how did your family come to live in the United States? Puerto Rico, Father was wounded during WWII, and was reassigned to New York City. MY mother and one brother moved with them.
3. Were there other family members in the area? Who? Yes, My aunt Angelita Vigo my mothers sister and mothers brother Victor Vigo. My fathers mother came along with us. My mother was taker care of her.
4. What was the house (apartment, farm, etc.) like? How many rooms? Bathrooms? Did it have electricity? Indoor plumbing? Telephones? We moved to the Westside of Manhattan. A two bedroom apartment. There was a bathroom for al tenants to share on that floor. No telephone. There was indoor plumbing. We later moved to the east side the neighborhood was called East Harlem.
5. Were there any special items in the house that you remember? No
6. What is your earliest childhood memory? After moving to the East Side. I Started school there. I went to school up to Junior High School. I attended Commerce High School up to my junior year. Move to a new high school named Louis D. Brandies High School. I was in the first graduating class. Attended church and a member of the boys club, public library. Lived closer to central park than before we move. I remember taking walks with my mom through the park.
7. Describe the personalities of your family members. Very good. Got along with everyone.
8. What kind of games did you play growing up? I learned how to play baseball in the park. Played basketball al the way through high school. Played on varsity team.
9. What was your favorite toy and why? Did not have one.
10. What was your favorite thing to do for fun (movies, beach, etc.)? We went to the beach as a family when we young. We used commercial transportation to get to where we were going. We went on picnics as a family.
11. Did you have family chores? What were they? Which was your least favorite? Yes we had chords. My mother work and my father. Me and my brothers and sister had to clean the house. Go with mom to do the shopping. Help mom with laundry by helping her take cloths to Laundromat. There were no chores that were unpleasant.
12. Did you receive an allowance? How much? Did you save your money or spend it? No allowance.
13. What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects? Where did you attend grade school? High school? College? School was good all the way through college. Best subject was math. My worst subject was History. We had to remember dates. I attended PS102 Kinder garden through4th grade. I finish my moved to another grade school for my 5th and 6th grade. Then I attended Thomas Jefferson Junior High School and then to Commerce High School. And finish High Schol at Louis D. Brandeis. I sterted going to Fahion Institute of Technology. Me and my cousin had a dream to open a clothing store for men. My cousin was a tailor and I was going to handle the business end of it. Instead I listen to a friend of my and joined the US Air Force in 1967.
14. What school activities and sports did you participate in? I was in the school symphony orchestra, dance band and provide music for talent shows, Played at graduations. Played baseball. My father used to play with the father of a professional baseball player and had a scout come out to watch me play through my senior year as well as basketball.
15. Do you remember any fads from your youth? Popular hairstyles? Clothes?
16. Who were your childhood heroes? My father who received the bronze Star medal from Dwight David Eisenhower during W. W. II. What were your favorite songs and music? I loved latin music. My favorite group was Joe Cuba Sextet and Tito Puente.
17. Did you have any pets? If so, what kind and what were their names? Dogs Elmo and Chelsea. Elmo was a Dash Hound. Chelsea was a mix.
18. What was your religion growing up? What church, if any, did you attend? Catholic attended Lady Queen of Angels.
19. Were you ever mentioned in a newspaper? Yes after retirement from I ran in the Special Olympics Torch Run and carried the torch.
20. Who were your friends when you were growing up? Rey Echevaria, Orlando Santos, Maria Santos as well as others. War The Viet Nam.
21. What world events had the most impact on you while you were growing up? Did any of them personally affect your family? The Viet Nam War. Both my brothers William and I entered the military at separate times but were in Viet Nam at the same time. He was wounded in the leg and recovered mentally.
22. Describe a typical family dinner. Did you all eat together as a family? Who did the cooking? What were your favorite foods? Rice, Red Beans and beef stew. We al sat together and said grace over the meal. My mother did the cooking and I did the desert. No favorite foods we ate what my mother made. For holidays we loved pork shoulder and pastelles made of bananas stuff with pork, raisins, red peppers and olives.
23. How were holidays (birthdays, Christmas, etc.) celebrated in your family? Did your family have special traditions? We would go out to each others home and have traditional meals together on certain holidays. On Christmas gifts were not put under the Christmas tre on Christmas but placed under our beds on the first Sunday in January. This was the day the wise men brought their gifts to Jesus.
24. How is the world today different from what it was like when you were a child? People are a lot smarter, better educated, everyone is in a hurry time just goes by. Everyone has a lot to do.
25. Who was the oldest relative you remember as a child? What do you remember about them? My grandmother Estebania Fuentes my fathers mother and my mothers mother Ruberto Cyntrone. They were both kind and loving.
26. What do you know about your family surname? Most countries the children carry the mothers maiden name. This is so they always know what there grandmothers name is. Take my name Tomas Gonzalez Vigo Jr. Tomas Gonzalez is my fathers name, Vigo is my mothers maiden name. In some countries the use their mothers maiden name as a middle name. My grandfather on my fathers side was a slave brought over from Africa to Puerto Rico. They had numbers painted on their fet to identify them.
27. Is there a naming tradition in your family, such as always giving the firstborn son the

name of his paternal grandfather? Yes

1. What stories have come down to you about your parents? Grandparents? More distant ancestors? none
2. Are there any stories about famous or infamous relatives in your family? None
3. Have any recipes been passed down to you from family members? No
4. Are there any physical characteristics that run in your family? No
5. Are there any special heirlooms, photos, bibles or other memorabilia that have been passed down in your family? None that I know of.
6. What was the full name of your spouse? Siblings? Parents? Elisa ReyesParas: Wife Son Tomas Paras Gonzalez III, Son Eric Paras Gonzalez, Evangelina Paras Gonzalez, Son Christopher Gonzalez. Father Tomas Gonzalez Fuentes, Mother Cristobalina Ruberto
7. When and how did you meet your spouse? What did you do on dates? I went out to diner one evening while station in the Philippines. I met her at the restaurant and she was waiting on me. We rode the train to the each for the weekend and stayed in a hut made of straw on the beach. Went dancing, movies.
8. What was it like when you proposed (or were proposed to)? Where and when did it happen? How did you feel? It happen at her parents house while I was asking her parents if they objected to me marring their daughter in January 1968. I felt good about it
9. Where and when did you get married? Angeles Roman Catholic Church on August 4th 1968. Angeles City, Republic of Philippines
10. What memory stands out the most from your wedding day? The reception afterwards.
11. How would you describe your spouse? What do (did) you admire most about them? Good hearted individual, always hapy, easy to get along with. Thin, always had a smile and remembered everyone names.
12. What do you believe is the key to a successful marriage? Love and kindness.
13. How did you find out your were going to be a parent for the first time? I thought she was just gaining weight when I took her to the doctor he told me.
14. Why did you choose your children's names? My oldest son and daughter were the easiest to chose. My father the only male son in his family and his sister was the daughter in the family so I names the two after so their names will still live on. Tomas P. Gonzalez 3rd and Evangelina P. Gonzalez. Both my father and his sister passed.
15. What was your proudest moment as a parent? Attending their Graduations in school.
16. What did your family enjoy doing together? Took trips, went out to visit family, had family picnics together
17. What was your profession and how did you choose it? My best friend ask me to go into the Air Force with him and that didn’t workout. He had six more months of school left.. So they enlisted me first. After retirement from the Air Force my son was working building a prison in Valdosta so I decided to fill out a application for correctional officer and got the job. I retired from Georgia Department of Corrections in 2005 as a Captain.
18. If you could have had any other profession what would it have been? Why wasn't it your first choice? I wanted to work Boarder Patrol or Department of Immigration. I applied for Boarder Patrol and Corrections at the same time and received a interview with corrections first.
19. Of all the things you learned from your parents, which do you feel was the most valuable? Helping your children, spending time with them and doing things together.
20. What accomplishments were you the most proud of? First accomplishment was my retirement from the Air Force. I was the first and the only one. What is the one thing you most want people to remember about you? My generosity and my willingness to help people.